

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PORT O 02535 301905Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /032 W
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R 301830Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1188
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L 2535

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, TD
SUBJECT: PANDAY TO RESIGN SEAT IN PARLIAMENT

REF: PORT OF SPAIN 2338 AND 2450

1. EXPRESS OF AUGUST 29 AND AUGUST 30 GUARDIAN HEAD-
LINED DEPOSED OPPOSITION LEADER, BASDEO PANDAY'S PROMISE
TO RESIGN HIS SEAT WHEN PARLIAMENT RECONVENES IN OCTOBER
AS LATEST GAMBIT IN THE CONTINUING ULF LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE.
IN ADDITION, PANDAY HAS CHALLENGED THE SIX ULF REPRESENTA-
TIVES WHO SUPPORTED HIS OUSTER TO RESIGN THEIR SEATS AS
WELL AND FACE THE LECTORATE FOR A NEW MANDATE.

2. LABOFF MADE INITIAL COURTESY CALL ON PANDAY AUGUST
29 AT LATTER'S SAN FERNANDO SUGAR WORKERS' HEADQUARTERS.
ALTHOUGH PURPOSE OF VISIT WAS TO TALK ABOUT TRADE UNION
MATTERS, PANDAY LAUNCHED INTO WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION
OF ULF SITUATION. HE EXPLAINED THAT HIS INTENTION NOW
IS TO RUN FOR HIS SEAT AGAIN IN THE BY-ELECTION WHICH
WILL FOLLOW HIS RESIGNATION, IN THE HOPE THAT THE SHAH
FACTION ALSO WILL CONTEST THE SEAT. PANDAY BELIEVES HE
CAN WIN BY A RESOUNDING MAJORITY REGARDLESS OF WHO RUNS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PORT O 02535 301905Z

AGAINST HIM AND THAT SUCH A VICTORY, OR THE SHAH GROUP'S
FAILURE TO CONTEST THE SEAT, WILL BE SEEN BY THE PUBLIC
AS JUSTIFYING HIS OWN POSITION IN THE LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE.
PANDAY'S CHALLENGE TO HIS DEPOSERS IS, IN EFFECT, TO
STOP HIDING BEHIND ULF PARTY MACHINERY AND COME OUT AND
SETTLE THE ISSUE IN THE ELECTORAL ARENA.

3. AMONG OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST IN PANDAY'S REMARKS WAS HIS VIEW THAT THE STRIFE WITHIN THE ULF LEADERSHIP IS A CONTEST BETWEEN CERTAIN IDEOLOGUES WHO REPRESENT ONLY THEMSELVES AND HIMSELF AS ONE WHO HAS THE SUPPORT NOT ONLY OF THE BULK OF THE PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP BUT OF ITS MORE NUMEROUS SUPPORTERS AS WELL. HE EXPRESSED OPTIMISM ABOUT ACHIEVING EVENTUAL VINDICATION AND SAID HE IS PRESSING FOR THE CONVENING OF A PARTY CONGRESS AS A MEANS TOWARDS THAT END. THE SHAH GROUP, HOWEVER, NOW CONTROLS MUCH OF THE PARTY MACHINERY AND IS IN A POSITION TO POSTPONE THE CONGRESS. NEVERTHELESS, PANDAY BELIEVES THAT THE GRASSROOTS PRESSURE HE IS SEEKING TO GENERATE AND SUSTAIN WILL PROVE IRRESISTIBLE AND THE CONGRESS WILL HAVE TO BE HELD.

4. PANDAY CLAIMED THAT SHAH IS ADEPT AT REVOLUTIONARY RHETORIC BUT HAS NO UNDERSTANDING OF A PARTY BASED ON THE WILL OF ITS MEMBERS AND IS OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE PEOPLE. ACCORDING TO PANDAY, THE SHAH GROUP MUST REALIZE THAT IT CANNOT DOMINATE THE PARTY INDEFINITELY FROM THE TOP AND WONDERED IF INDEED SHAH DID NOT HAVE ANOTHER COUP ATTEMPT IN MIND.

5. WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT POSSIBILITY THAT DEFEAT OF SHAH AND HIS SUPPORTERS WOULD MEAN DESTRUCTION OF ULF, PANDAY DID NOT DISAGREE BUT CLAIMED THAT THE SHAH
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PORT O 02535 301905Z

FACTION HAD SO LITTLE SUPPORT THAT ITS DEPARTURE WOULD NOT DETRACT APPRECIABLY FROM THE PARTY'S NUMERICAL STRENGTH.

6. COMMENT: PANDAY RECEIVED LABOFF WARMLY AND GAVE IMPRESSION OF EBULLIENCE AND OPTIMISM, TEMPERED BY THE REALIZATION THAT THE CURRENT STRUGGLE WILL NOT BE SETTLED OVERNIGHT AND THAT THERE ARE RISKS TO HIS APPROACH. HE APPEARS GENUINELY TO ENJOY THE POLITICAL DUEL IN WHICH HE IS ENGAGED AND SEEMS CONFIDENT OF BACKING FROM THE GREAT MAJORITY OF ULF MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS. HE BELIEVES HIS OPPONENTS CAN BE DEFEATED IF THEY CAN BE LURED INTO AN OPEN FIGHT, AND HIS STRATEGY OF CONSTANT PUBLIC PRESSURE IS AIMED TOWARD THAT END. IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL HOW SUCCESSFUL THAT STRATEGY WILL PROVE TO BE, BUT IN ANY EVENT THE NEXT FEW WEEKS OF OPPOSITION POLITICS PROMISE TO BE LIVELY AND INTERESTING ONES. MEMCON FOLLOWS BY POUCH.
FOX

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Message Attributes

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